

be luxuries. Children should not be entitled to them because they happen to live in affluence; they are entitled to them because they live in America.

Let us look to this important anniversary for inspiration to desegregate American education for good and for all—to complete the work begun so bravely by the Little Rock Nine.

COURAGE AND BRUTALITY IN BURMA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the past 10 days, people around the world have watched with admiration and increasing trepidation as over 100,000 courageous Burmese citizens, led by thousands of maroon clad Buddhist monks, have demonstrated peacefully in Burma's capital city in support of democracy and human rights. They have been calling for an end to military dictatorship and the release of Burma's rightful, democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been either in prison or under house arrest for 11 of the past 18 years.

Today, there are reports that Burmese soldiers had cordoned off the streets, fired tear gas, shot and killed several of the protesters and a Japanese journalist, raided monasteries and arrested opposition party members and hundreds of monks. The vicious response by the Burmese military against masses of peaceful, dignified, unarmed citizens, while not surprising, is intolerable and should be universally condemned.

Earlier this week, President Bush made a forceful statement before the United Nations General Assembly criticizing the repression of Burma's military leaders and announcing tighter sanctions and visa restrictions. The President's announcement is welcome.

U.S. leadership is essential, but it can only go so far. Bringing democracy and human rights to the Burmese people will require far stronger pressure from its neighbors and trading partners such as China, Thailand, Russia, and India. It will require these and other nations to disavow the failed policies of engagement with the Burmese junta.

I have long believed that engagement is most often the best policy, but there comes a time when it has demonstrably failed, and there is no more obvious example of this than Burma. A different approach is long overdue.

Burma's friends and allies must make unequivocally clear what President Bush and others have said, and what the brave citizens of Burma are calling for: Burma will suffer severe economic sanctions unless Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners are released and the generals in charge agree to hand over power.

In his own speech at the United Nations, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced hope that the Burmese junta would "exercise utmost restraint" and engage in a dialogue with "relevant parties" in seeking national reconciliation. Obviously, that has not hap-

pened. Since then, the Secretary General has sent his special envoy to Burma to try to convince the Burmese junta to resolve this crisis peacefully.

It is very disappointing that China, Burma's largest trading partner, has once again put its economic interests, and Burma's corrupt generals, above the fundamental rights of the Burmese people. China, which has more influence over the Burmese junta than any other government, blocked the U.N. Security Council from adopting a resolution condemning the violence.

It is a sad commentary on a country that the rest of the world entrusted to host the next Olympics. While China has urged the generals to exercise restraint, history has shown that in Burma words alone are not enough. We hoped China would act differently this time, but so far we have been mistaken.

Many times in the past, peaceful protests in Burma have been put down with brute force. Countless Burmese citizens have been imprisoned or killed for doing nothing more than speaking out in support of democracy.

The past 10 days of protests have attracted far greater crowds, and because of the Internet the whole world can see their numbers, their bravery, and the strength of their conviction. The people of Burma are an inspiration to people everywhere, and they are asking for our support. Without it they cannot succeed. If all nations stand united behind them now, Burma's long nightmare can finally come to an end.

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. CONRAD. As the chairman knows, many rural hospitals are facing significant financial pressure and are finding it increasingly difficult to operate under the Medicare prospective payment system. In response, the chairman and I have worked closely to support our rural facilities and established the Critical Access Hospital Program in 1997. This program was designed to help small, rural facilities remain financially viable in the face of inadequate Medicare reimbursement, and it has been tremendously beneficial to maintaining access to hospital care across North Dakota and other rural states.

Mr. BAUCUS. I share my colleague's support for the Critical Access Hospital Program. Like North Dakota, Montana struggles to maintain sufficient access to hospital care. The Critical Access Hospital Program has been an important component in ensuring that our hospitals can remain open and continue to serve Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. CONRAD. Despite the successes that have been achieved under the Critical Access Hospital Program, changes made as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 have harmed the ability of certain critical hospitals, such as St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson, ND, to become critical access

hospitals. It is imperative that flexibility be reinstated in the program to allow States to deem hospitals as necessary providers and, therefore, eligible for critical access hospital status. I have spoken with you about this issue in the past and am pleased that you are willing to consider this issue during consideration of a Medicare package later in the year.

Mr. DORGAN. I strongly support reinstating the ability of States to deem necessary providers to be critical access hospitals. The Critical Access Hospital Program has helped ensure that the doors stay open at many hospitals in rural America. Without this program, many Medicare beneficiaries in my State would have to drive hours to receive health care. I think it is important to give States flexibility to deem necessary providers as critical access hospitals and not rely on a one-size-fits-all definition. If we don't address this issue, I am worried that one of our hospitals in western North Dakota, St. Joseph's Hospital, may not be able to survive. I appreciate Chairman BAUCUS' commitment to work with us to address this issue and to consider modifications to the Critical Access Hospital Program that would allow St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson, ND, to participate.

Mr. BAUCUS. I applaud my colleague's efforts on this issue and assure you that I am committed to working with you to enact modifications and improvements to the Critical Access Hospital Program in Medicare legislation later this year that will assist hospitals like St. Joseph's.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank my colleague for his commitment and look forward to working with you to craft a reasonable solution that benefits St. Joseph's.

NATIONAL LEARN AND SERVE CHALLENGE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this week marks the first-ever nationwide Learn and Serve Challenge, a series of events occurring across the country to raise awareness about the value of service learning and the role of Learn and Serve America in supporting and promoting it.

Service learning is a way for schools, colleges, and communities to combine community service and academic learning in ways that increase student learning, strengthen partnerships between schools and the communities they serve, and perhaps most importantly, tap into young people's endless ideas and enthusiasm for solving problems.

We know that the real benefits of service learning go far beyond the events of a week, or even a year. They last a lifetime, because countless students who participate in service learning continue to serve throughout their lives.

As my brother Robert Kennedy said, each time persons stand up for an

ideal, or act to improve the lot of others, or strike out against injustice, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

When young students create such ripples and see their effects, they remember them all their lives. They remember their own ability to help others, and the joy and satisfaction it can bring. They develop a habit of service that follows them throughout their careers. And this is what makes service learning so very important.

Through community service, all of us have the opportunity to make our own lives better by helping others. And through strong service learning, schools are teaching generations of young people the joy of helping others. We are also doing much more. We are making our democracy stronger. Our democracy depends on the active involvement of citizens to shape our government and shape our communities.

There is no question that America needs students who are well-educated in every way. We are working to do better in this respect, but we need to do much more. We need students who grow up understanding what it is to serve, to give back to their community, to help others. Our nation will always draw strength from a committed and engaged citizenry. Service learning helps us build that better citizenry, one student at a time.

Seventeen years ago, I was the original sponsor of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. We reached across the aisle to recognize an important priority: to encourage and increase service in America. Among the many accomplishments of that legislation was the creation of Serve America, a new program to promote the practice of service learning in American schools.

That program, now called Learn and Serve America, has exceeded the high expectations we had for it. Last year, 1.4 million students participated in service learning nationwide through Learn and Serve. Since the creation of the program, over 14 million students have served their communities because of it. It's an impressive accomplishment to have touched so many lives. I congratulate all of those who have participated in Learn and Serve over the years, and especially those who have guided the program so successfully.

The Learn and Serve Challenge events taking place across America this week are an effective way to bring new and well-deserved attention to the program and to the benefits of service learning, and I look forward to even more impressive successes of this unique program in the years ahead.

PROJECTS SPONSORSHIP—S. 1745

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, as chairwoman of the Appropriations Sub-

committee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and related agencies, I rise today to clarify for the U.S. Senate the sponsorship of several congressionally designated projects included in the report accompanying S. 1745, the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, S. Rpt. 110-124. Specifically:

The report should indicate that funding provided through the Department of Justice for the Presidential Candidate Nominating Conventions for 2008 was requested by Senators ALLARD, COLEMAN, KLOBUCHAR, and SALAZAR.

Senator LEVIN should be listed as having requested funding for Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, MI, for an academic prevention and workforce skills program funded through the Department of Justice.

Senator STABENOW should be listed as having requested funding for the Ruth Ellis Center, Highland Park, MI, for an outreach program funded through the Department of Justice.

Senators SCHUMER and BILL NELSON should not be listed as having requested funding for Regional Climate Centers funded through the Department of Commerce.

Finally, Senator MCCASKILL has withdrawn her request for the following activities funded through the Department of Justice: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, RAINN, Partnership for a Drug Free America Meth360 Program, and Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

RETIREMENT OF GENERAL PETER PACE

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a true patriot and exceptional leader of our military, GEN. Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for his more than 40 years of dedicated service to the U.S. Armed Forces and to our country.

General Pace has devoted his life to service of his country. For him, duty, honor, and commitment have been more than words. They have been a career and a way of life. America is great because of the service and sacrifice of Americans like General Pace. We are deeply grateful for his service.

General Pace has consistently put the military ideal of service to country before himself and has shown exceptional concern for the well-being of our men and women in uniform. Indeed, if there is one trait that can be said to define the character of General Pace, it is that he has been guided in all his decisions by an intense feeling of duty to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who defend the freedoms we all enjoy.

This brave patriot is retiring October 1, marking the end of a long and distinguished military career.

GEN. Peter Pace began his service to America at the U.S. Naval Academy. In 1968, after completing officer training

at the Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, General Pace was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, of the 1st Marine Division in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, he served first as a rifle platoon leader and subsequently became an assistant operations officer. He joined the platoon during the battle for Hue City and was the unit's third platoon leader in as many weeks.

For his service and heroism, General Pace was decorated for valor during his tour in Vietnam. Yet what mattered most to him were the troops he led, some of whom, tragically, lost their lives for the country we love. General Pace holds as one of his most valued treasures the photo of LCpl Guido Farinaro, the first marine he lost in combat. The lance corporal's forever young likeness is under the glass on General Pace's desk, each day reminding him of the impact of his decisions as a military leader. General Pace has often been quoted as saying that it is the duty of every soldier to live his or her life in an exemplary way and take on an extra measure of responsibility for those fellow soldiers who have been killed and whose families now live without them. This dedication to the fallen, and to the survivors, is characteristic of General Pace.

Following Vietnam, General Pace was assigned to Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, where he served as security detachment commander at Camp David, a White House social aide, and platoon leader of Special Ceremonial Platoon.

Over the next two decades, General Pace held command at virtually every level and served our country throughout the world. While a brigadier general, he served as deputy commander of Marine Forces, Somalia, from December of 1992 to February of 1993, and as deputy commander of Joint Task Force—Somalia from October 1993 to March 1994.

On September 30, 2005, General Pace became the country's senior military leader when he was sworn in as the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on September 30, 2005. General Pace also made history—he had the distinction of being the first marine to serve in this role and of being the first Italian American to do so.

I know from my personal conversations with him that General Pace took modest pride from that last fact. And believe that General Pace—whose name means “peace” in Italian—knew full well that his was a fitting name for a soldier because the path to achieving peace, and to preserving it, is through the kind of strong and capable a military to which he devoted his career.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is always a challenging job but never more so than at a time when the Nation is at war. He has been a respected source of military counsel for our country's leaders. He has worked to help transform the military so that it will be able to address the myriad of global challenges during this time of